

Chambers of Commerce, by newspapers, by educational groups or civic clubs. One strong practical idealist like Allen Dobson could put it over in any American city, no matter what the sponsoring organization. Any group wishing to undertake a similar venture would profit by the experience of Youth Incorporated, which would be only too happy to pass on helpful pointers.

Coming over the Atlantic from London to New York, Captain J. M. Kirkpatrick, of our American Overseas Airliner, radioed ahead to his New York

office suggesting that the plane, which carried more diverse nationalities than he had ever flown in 300 Atlantic crossings, be christened "Flagship UN."

"People think of the airplane as an instrument of destruction," he mused as we neared Gander, Newfoundland. "But it can also be used as an instrument of peace.

"If other cities would sponsor goodwill trips like this, we wouldn't have to use the airplane to destroy things. We could use it to build for a better day in the world."

World Understanding in the Elementary Grades

DELIA GOETZ

How will your pupils, when grown, feel toward people of other lands? Delia Goetz, Specialist on the Preparation and Exchange of Materials, U. S. Office of Education, poses this as a crucial question of our time.

THE MOUND OF MAIL on the desk in the Division of International Educational Relations grows higher each day. The height of the mound is mute evidence that you and hundreds like you realize your responsibility for doing something about developing world understanding. The tone of these letters shows that you feel this is a big order for your fifth graders, with your already full schedule. There are many questions in the letters. "Where do I begin?", many of you ask. It's a good question. Why not begin by deciding what you *are* and are *not* trying to do?

First of all you are *not* coaching applicants for the quiz kids programs.

Neither are you developing star performers who will bob up and tell everything about any country in the world next time the principal steps into the room. You *are* trying to develop world understanding. What does that mean? With children in the elementary grades it means gaining some knowledge of and appreciation for people of other cultures in their own community and in other lands.

Children Are Eager to Understand

In order for children to understand people, they must be able to put themselves in the place of these people, know their problems and how they feel

about them. Children at the intermediate level are particularly sensitive to other people, eager to find out about them, how they live, what they eat, what their schools are like, how they earn their living, what they do for fun. These are the things they must know in order to be able to put themselves in another person's place, to know how he feels and thinks about certain questions rather than to know isolated facts about his country. In studying the geography and history of other countries you will help children realize how peoples' lives are shaped by the region in which they live and by the events of its history.

YOUR PUPILS—TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW

Keep in mind that some day about 20 years from now you will pick up the morning paper, adjust your bifocals and see in the headlines names which you marked present today. One of "your boys" has been named ambassador to a foreign country, another is serving as technical consultant to a foreign government, several are working with people who have come to this country for training, scores have taken tours to other lands. Your pupils will meet and work with many people who may never have known anyone from this country. The opinion these people form of our country and our way of life will be determined by one or two who are in your class this year.

Twenty years from now, you are not going to be so much concerned over whether these former boys and girls of yours remember the geography of these countries in which they will work or visit—the length of the rivers, the height of the mountains, the exact ton-

nage of the country's exports and imports and a whole head full of other statistics. But in meeting and working with people from other lands there are other things that you hope your former pupils haven't forgotten—habits and attitudes you tried so hard to help your fifth graders develop; habits and attitudes which would make them good members of their own group and of their own community as well as of the world.

Appreciation for the Individual

Respect and appreciation for the individual whoever he may be was one thing that you and your fifth graders decided was important to remember in dealing with others, whether they were in the classroom or on another continent. You knew that if children did not learn to respect and appreciate members of their group they would have little concern for people on the other side of the world. And so you and your fifth graders were careful to see that each member of the group had an opportunity to take part and to express himself.

"Don't jump to conclusions," you told your fifth graders, whether they discussed problems of their own grade or of people in another country. Over and over you reminded them that they must be sure they had enough information about a problem, a place, or a person before they formed opinions or drew conclusions. It was important to remember this no matter where they were or what they did, but you reminded them of it in particular when they studied other countries. You had tried to have them realize that no matter how large or how small a country

was there were many contrasts within it and in the way people looked and lived. You had helped the children realize how unfair and inaccurate it was to judge an entire country by one region, or to form opinions of all the people by knowing a few. By the time the year was over most of those fifth graders were not so quick to generalize, to say *all* Puerto Ricans or *all* Norwegians or *all* Guatemalans do this or are that.

Peoples' Problems Studied

Your pupils had formed the habit, too, of asking questions. If they read about the farmers or weavers or miners of a country they had asked what the other people in the country did and how they lived. They had learned to think about people and their problems, and they were not satisfied with knowing only how people made merry at fiestas, and seeing the colorful costumes they wore. They learned, for instance, that one of the problems of the Mexican farmer was to get water to irrigate his fields, to develop crops which grew in dry soil, and that in tropical countries where pests and germs were not killed by freezing the farmer had to fight many diseases which threatened his crops. In learning about problems, your pupils came to understand them better and to realize that people the world over are alike in many ways and have many of the same problems.

Yet you didn't overemphasize these similarities or have your children think that there were no differences among peoples of the world. You knew it was important to understand and develop a right attitude toward these differences. The children learned that many of the customs and traditions of other

countries were different from ours, and they tried to find the reasons for these differences. People of other countries, like people in their own town, they learned, had different ways of doing things, yet this did not mean that they were peculiar or inferior. It was helpful to have the children realize that to many foreigners our ways, too, seemed peculiar.

Community Resources Used

To find material on some of these topics had not been easy. The children began to look around their own community, to find people who had come from the country which they were studying, or who had spent some time there, or perhaps had made a special study of it. It was surprising how much information they found this way and how much they and the school had benefited. Cooperating with the children had awakened in many people an interest in the school and what it was trying to do.

You tried to help children form the habit of thinking how their own way of life would differ if they lived in another country. Which of their habits would they retain? Which would they discard? Would the children from Iowa, for instance, wear the same clothes if they lived in Iran? Would the children of Texas eat the same kind of food if they lived in Turkey? And so you hoped that those young people who were going to other countries had kept this intelligent curiosity about other people. Above all you hoped that they had kept an open-minded attitude about customs and traditions which differed from their own.

Learning how people of different cul-

tures in their own community worked together had helped the children see the importance of cooperation. They could understand the interdependence of nations and people when they learned that their community sent products to other parts of the world and at the same time depended on the work of other people for its everyday needs. There was a tendency at first when children studied countries not so well developed as our own to think that we were superior and they questioned if these nations could help us. Yet as they learned more about other peoples and cultures they had come to realize that we are indebted to practically every country in the world for something which made us healthier or happier or more comfortable. Visualizing a day without "necessities" discovered or invented by people of other countries, or without the books and music and pictures which they had given the world helped your fifth graders appreciate these contributions.

Your children also learned about the interdependence of nations when they studied the work of the United Nations. Conflicts broke out between nations and in finding information to help understand the reasons back of these conflicts your children learned how the lives of people everywhere

were interwoven with their own. They learned, too, that what they did in their own community might affect the outcome of conflicts in another part of the world. How hoarding, for instance, affected prices and people was a problem even children could understand.

The Teacher Sees Results

That year with the fifth grade helped you as well as the children. They liked and admired you and imitated your attitudes and were influenced by your ideas. And so you had looked within yourself and probed your own prejudices to be sure that you were not passing them on to the children. As a result you had developed the habit of looking at other people and their problems with an open mind.

It had been a good year for you and those fifth graders. Looking back now you don't remember that they made particularly outstanding grades, and they didn't win any contests. But in developing an interest in other people's problems, in learning to work together, in forming the habit of reserving judgment until they had sufficient information, and above all, in learning to respect others' rights and opinions, although they conflicted with their own, they had laid a sure foundation for world understanding.

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